

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 1 through 17 and 60 through 71 are pending, with Claims 1, 4, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, and 66 being independent. Claims 18 through 59 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 2, 4, 60 through 66, 69, and 70 have been amended.

The Official Action required the cancellation of non-elected Claims 18 through 60. This requirement is respectfully traversed. Claims 18 through 59 have been cancelled as required. Non-elected Claim 60, which has been amended to depend solely from elected Claim 1, has been respectfully retained, and rejoinder thereof is earnestly solicited upon the allowance of Claim 1.

The Amendment filed March 6, 2003, was objected to under 35 U.S.C. § 132 on the grounds that the amendment of "<52" and "<60" to read --≤52-- and --≤60-- constitutes new matter. Claims 1, 3 through 17, and 61 through 71 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 1st paragraph, for lack of written description for like reasons, and because of the inequality in Claim 70. All objections and rejections are respectfully traversed, and are submitted to have been obviated by the amendment of the specification and Claims 1, 2, 61 through 66, and 69 to reverse the objected-to amendment and by the amendment of Claim 70 in a manner respectfully believed to obviate the grounds of rejection, which amendment is respectfully submitted by Applicant to find support at, e.g., page 23 of the specification, equation (c)'.

Claim 69 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite. All rejections are respectfully traversed, and are submitted to have been obviated by the amendment of the claim in a manner respectfully believed to avoid the grounds of rejection.

Claims 1, 9, 10, 13, and 69 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 5-297256 ("JP '256"). All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, inter alia, that no lens is present between (a) the negative lens located on the most object side of the first lens unit and (b) the second negative lens.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that JP '256 fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-discussed claimed feature as recited, inter alia, in Claim 1.

Claim 4 was not rejected over JP '256, and has been rewritten, among other amendments, in independent form; accordingly, allowance thereof is earnestly solicited.


The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, and is believed to clearly place this application in condition for allowance. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that a full appreciation of these amendments will not require undue time or effort given the Examiner's familiarity with this application. Moreover, this Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicant earnestly believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C.
office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our
address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicant

Registration No. 37,838

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

DSG\lp

DC_MAIN 141937v1